

Message Text

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65

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 SP-02

CIEP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15 STR-04

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FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2460

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

UNCLAS THESSALONIKI 0598

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EIND, ELAB, EPAP, PINT, GR

SUBJECT: DISSENSION IN WESTERN MACEDONIA FUR INDUSTRY

1. LOCAL PRESS FOR PAST FEW DAYS HAS GIVEN HEAVY COVERAGE TO DISPUTES AND DEMONSTRATIONS IN WESTERN MACEDONIAN CENTERS OF KASTORIA, SIATISTA, FLORINA, AMYNDEON AND GREVENA. CONTROVERSY CENTERS ON PROTESTS OF FIRST TWO CITIES, WHICH PRESENTLY HAVE MONOPOLY ON FREE IMPORTATION AND PROCESSING OF FUR CLIPPINGS, AGAINST APPEALS TO GOVERNMENT BY LAST THREE THAT SIMILAR PRIVILEGES BE EXTENDED TO THEM. KASTORIA AND SIATISTA RESIDENTS HAVE TAKEN TO STREETS, ERECTED BARRICADES, AND CALLED WORK STOPPAGES TO PUBLICIZE THEIR STAND THAT MONOPOLY SHOULD NOT BE EXTENDED, ON GROUNDS THAT SUCH "DIASPORA" WOULD LEAD TO A DEGENERATION OF PRODUCT QUALITY AND OF THE TRADE.

2. CITIZENS OF FLORINA SENT APPEAL OCTOBER 2 TO PRIME MINISTER AND ALL CABINET MEMBERS EMPHASIZING THAT THEIRS WAS A DEPRESSED BORDER COMMUNITY WHICH WAS STEADILY LOSING POPULATION BECAUSE OF POOR ECONOMIC PROSPECTS, THAT IT NEEDED NEW INDUSTRY TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS, AND THAT NO REAL GROUNDS EXISTED TO FEAR THAT QUALITY WOULD BE LOWERED AS
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RESULT OF EXTENSION OF PRODUCTION CENTERS.

3. SITUATION HAD REACHED SUCH HEAT IN SIATISTA AND KASTORIA THAT MINISTER OF NORTHERN GREECE MARTIS PERSONALLY PAID VISIT TO FORMER OCTOBER 2, ADDRESSING POPULACE AND ASSURING THEM NO DECISION HAD YET BEEN TAKEN ON ISSUE AND THAT GOG WOULD CONSULT ALL PARTIES CONCERNED BEFORE ACTING ON SUBJECT.

4. COMMENT: IN RECENT CONVERSATION KASTORIA NOMARCHIAL OFFICIAL TOLD CONSUL GENERAL THAT CITY IS "RICHEST IN GREECE". BY CONTRAST, NEIGHBORING GREVENA IS MOST ECONOMICALLY DEPRESSED NOMOS IN NORTHERN GREECE AND ECONOMIC PROSPECTS OF FLORINA, FLANKING KASTORIA TO THE NORTH, ARE FAR FROM BRIGHT.
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